



DATE: April 26, 2016

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission
FROM: Cedric Novenario, Staff Liaison
SUBJECT: Update on Traffic and Transportation Activities

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update on traffic and transportation activities in Los Altos and Santa Clara County

BACKGROUND

The transportation services section of Engineering is tasked with delivering Capital Improvement Projects, handling vehicle related traffic concerns, handling pedestrian and bicycle related concerns, and participates in regional project planning and funding activities. The remainder of this report describes these activities.

DISCUSSION

In the current fiscal year, the transportation services section has several capital improvement projects in varying stages of work. Below is a summary of these projects:

Capital Improvement Projects in Construction

- Traffic signal improvements at San Antonio/First/Cuesta
 - This project is to upgrade signal equipment to be compatible with Santa Clara County. The signal poles are also an upgrade to remove the median mounted poles that regularly get hit by vehicles.
 - Project is anticipated to be completed by the end of April 2016
- Bicycle/Vehicle Detection loop project
 - This is a city-wide installation of camera technology that will detect vehicles and bicycles at the intersection. The camera are advantageous in several ways including ease of maintenance and adjustment, ability to perform vehicle counts, ability to provide a lead-bicycle timing phase, and is IP capable for future intelligent transportation systems projects in Los Altos

Capital Improvement Projects in Design

- Covington Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements
 - This project will improve the existing sidewalk and add a restricted hours bike lane on Covington Road between Miramonte Avenue and Eastwood Drive. A restricted hours bike lane essentially restricts parking during certain hours of the day to allow the use of a full bike lane for students going to Blach school.
- Miramonte Avenue Class I Pathway
 - Staff will be awarding a design contract at the April 12 City Council meeting for the design of a Class I Pathway. However, the approach staff will take is to provide an opportunity for public input on three design concepts that aim to achieve bike and pedestrian safety. Tentatively, these concepts will be: Class I Pathway, improved walkway and bike lanes, or improved walkway and an improved bike route.
- Carmel Terrace Class I Pathway
 - Staff created three design concepts to address bike and pedestrian safety: Class I Pathway, improved walkway and bike lanes, or improved walkway and an improved bike route. The approach is similar to the Covington Road and Miramonte Avenue projects. Staff presented these concepts to the Blach PTA in early March for comments. The next step is hold a meeting with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission and effected residents. This meeting is TBD.
- El Monte/Springer Intersection Improvements
 - The aim of this project is improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety. Many of the concerns at this intersection relates to gaps in pedestrian access traveling north and south, motorist failure to yield to pedestrians, and gaps in bike lane facilities traveling north and south. Staff recently installed flashing stop signs to enhance the motorist awareness of the stop sign. These have proven effective in surrounding cities. Mountain View will install signs reminding motorist to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. During the summer, staff will enhance the existing crosswalks and add striping for turning movements. Staff is investigating pedestrian improvements through the existing median islands. However, the existing redwood trees at these medians are complicating the design
- Grant Road Rubberized Cape Seal and Bike Lane
 - These are two combined projects. The rubberized cape seal is to improve pavement conditions on Grant Road frontage from Grant Road to Homestead Road. A buffered bike lane will also be installed as part of this project. A buffered bike lane provides a three foot painted buffered space between the actual bike lane and travel lane. Where there isn't enough space, Sharrows will be installed to guide cyclists. The construction contract will be awarded in April 2016
- Annual Projects – Resurfacing, Slurry and Striping
 - Staff is currently identifying a list of streets that require road maintenance improvements. Resurfacing projects typically repair roads that have moderate structural failure. Slurry projects help extends the useful life of roads that are in good condition but have not been resurfaced in some time.



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The striping projects replace or enhance the striping on the resurfacing or slurry projects. Various striping improvements around the City, such as bike lanes, markings and legends can also be included in this work also

- Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)
 - The Loucks Avenue NTMP is anticipated to go to Council on April 26, 2016
 - At least two other areas in Los Altos have initiated the NTMP process, but ultimately did not proceed further because of a lack of consensus regarding improvement
- Advanced Traffic Management Study
 - The goal of this project is to develop a concept of operations to implement intelligent transportation systems (ITS) in Los Altos. ITS is a collection of communications and information technology equipment to aid in the management and operations of signals and traffic operations. These include smart traffic controllers, video detection, closed-circuit television cameras, and communication lines such as fiber optics, blue tooth, wifi or radio. The installation of ITS in Los Altos is an important step to address current and future technology advances such as adaptive/predictive signal timing and automated/connected vehicles.
- Speed Zone Survey
 - The last speed zone survey took place in 2012/2013. An update is due. Vehicle volume and speed data is currently being collected at collector and arterial street segments throughout the City. Speed zone surveys determine what the posted speed limit should be. A valid speed zone survey is required to conduct enforcement by radar gun. Enforcement can be conducted by the “pace-method,” however, that is not feasible in Los Altos.
- Pathway Improvements
 - This project investigates the neighborhood pathway connector condition and prioritizes their improvements. Several of these connectors are straight forward repairs, while others will take coordination with adjacent residents because of differencing pathway/backyard elevations.
- Foothill Expressway Improvements
 - This is a joint project to add a third lane on Foothill Expressway between El Monte Avenue and San Antonio Road. The project will also improve the intersection of El Monte and Foothill Expressway. The aim of this project is improve traffic congestion. The city has allocated funds for design, which will be done by Santa Clara County. The County has not identified a solid funding source yet, however, they are proposing this project as part of a sales tax measure in November. This will be discussed further later in this report.

Vehicle Related Traffic Concerns

Over the past year, the County has experienced an increase in traffic between 10%-15%. Los Altos has experienced a similar increase. For example, the traffic on University Avenue has experienced a 17% increase in traffic within 2015. The increase in traffic has resulted in some streets experiencing cut-through traffic in their neighborhood. These streets are:

- University Avenue
 - Motorists are exiting Foothill Expressway to access El Monte Avenue to I280 or circumventing the intersection of Foothill/El Monte to proceed east on Foothill Expressway.
 - The 85% speed was recorded at 28 mph
- Loucks Avenue
 - Cut-through traffic has resulted in the residents petitioning for an NTMP. The City Council will consider the Loucks Avenue NTMP on April 26, 2016
- Jordan Avenue
 - Motorists are accessing Jordan Avenue from San Antonio Road or El Camino Real, presumably to bypass the intersection of El Camino Real/San Antonio Road.
- W. Edith Avenue
 - Staff has received reports of speeding on this street. 85% speed was taken by both the police department and by staff on two different occasions, which resulted in the speed to be 28 mph.
 - Staff has also received reports that motorists are waiting an inordinate amount of time at the traffic signals along W. Edith Avenue. Staff has worked with the County to adjust the signal timing at Foothill/W. Edith and W. Edith/First/Los Altos Avenue. Staff also observed traffic operations during the PM commute time at the intersection of San Antonio/W. Edith/Main. In both cases, there is about a 10-12 minute period (approximately 2 signal cycles) where moderate vehicle queueing occurs. This type of queueing is expected during the PM commute hour.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Related Concerns

The layout of the city is unique in that it strives to maintain its rural character. However, preserving the rural character presents many challenges when it comes to providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities to encourage non-motorized travel and to improve safety. Staff has received numerous concerns at marked crossings where motorists are not yielding to pedestrians. To address this, staff has installed a flexible sign post at the crosswalk advising motorists to yield to pedestrians. These are installed along University Avenue, W. Edith Avenue, Cuesta Drive, Portland Avenue, El Monte Avenue.

A sizeable portion of the city's bicycle and pedestrian travel is from the school community. During the Pedestrian Master Plan outreach, the school community expressed that the perceived lack of facilities and speeding vehicles prevent students from walking or biking to school. To improve the situation, staff applied for an Active Transportation Grant in 2015 that identified school route improvements throughout the City. Projects were identified that would benefit students attending public schools in Los Altos. Unfortunately, the city did not receive the grant. In fact, the Bay Area as a whole did not do well. Staff anticipates to



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present a plan to the City Council in late April 2016 to phase the school route improvement projects over the next few years.

To address speeding concerns, staff implemented a 15 miles per hour (mph) speed zone around schools per Section 22353(2) of the California Vehicle Code. These restrictions were also identified in the Pedestrian Master Plan. To qualify for the 15mph restriction, the school must have frontage or direct access to a two lane road that is normally 30mph or lower. There is a 500 foot boundary limit for the 15mph speed limits. The boundary is not a radius; however, the boundary applies to the road fronting the school and the road that has direct access to the school. The school speed limits are in effect during the school day only. All other times are as posted. The maintenance department anticipates completing signage related to the 15mph zones soon.

Vision Zero

In February 2016, the BPAC received a presentation from the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition regarding the concept of Vision Zero. Vision Zero is a policy that has a goal to have zero deaths or life-altering injuries on a jurisdiction's roadways by a certain date and to accept that all deaths are preventable. Cities such as San Francisco, San Jose, and Fremont have instituted or are developing a Vision Zero policy. Staff and the BPAC are looking into the applicability and feasibility of this policy. The BPAC has also identified Vision Zero in their work plan for Council Review.

The basic framework of Vision Zero revolves around the concepts/programs of Evaluation, Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement, Engagement, and Equity. Developing a Vision Zero implementation plan should incorporate this framework. Below is a summary of these concepts/programs that Los Altos has or is working on:

- Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP) -Evaluation and **Engineering**
- Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) – Evaluation and **Engineering**
- BPAC Education Subcommittee - **Education**
- Routine traffic enforcement at schools and frequently requested enforcement areas - **Enforcement**

In addition to continuing efforts associated with the above concepts/programs, the following concepts/programs are elements that are recommended for development in order to complement the above, and to construct a Vision Zero Program:

- Evaluation – i.e., enhance the efforts included in the BTP and PMP to develop programs that will obtain pedestrian/bike data on a regular basis
- Encouragement – i.e., develop outreach strategies to educate all road users regarding safety
- Engagement and Equity – i.e., engage with road users who may be underrepresented

It must be stressed that Vision Zero is not specifically targeted to benefit cyclists and pedestrians, but motorists can also benefit from Vision Zero. Efforts to discourage speeding, inattentive driver behavior and compliance with the law are all activities under Vision Zero that can benefit motorists.

Regional Activities

Los Altos is a member agency within the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). The VTA, in addition to being the public transit provider, is the Congestion Management Agency (CMA) for Santa Clara County. Since Los Altos is a member agency, the city has representation on the VTA Technical Advisory Committee, the Systems Operations Management Working Group and the Capital Improvement Working Group. City staff participates in all these groups monthly.

The task of the CMA and member agencies is to identify and develop projects that can improve traffic operations throughout Santa Clara County. The majority of these projects are regionally significant ranging from freeway/expressway level projects, multi-jurisdictional transportation projects, and inter-county projects. Member agencies provide input on these projects related to city-level impacts and makes requests to mitigate identified impacts.

The VTA also develops and/or administers transportation grant funds. Member agencies help refine grant requirements, scoring criteria, and allocation methods. Examples of recent and upcoming transportation grant funds are:

- One Bay Area Grant (OBAG)
 - A call for projects is scheduled for later this year. OBAG is split into a guaranteed pot of funding (formula based on population and housing) and a competitive pot of funding. Projects typically require a complete streets treatment, i.e., the project must address motorists, pedestrians and cyclist improvements.
- Transportation Development Act, Article III
 - A call for projects is due in May of this year. These projects must be pedestrian and bicycle related. This pot of funding is guaranteed based on a population formula. This year's allocation is approximately \$45,000.00. These funds can also be banked toward a larger amount in the future.
- Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF)
 - A \$10 fee is added to every registration fee in Santa Clara County for projects improving road conditions and operations. These are allocated between a guaranteed pot and an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) competitive pot of funding.
 - Los Altos typically receives over \$175,000 of VRF funds a year. Recent use of these funds includes the Homestead Improvement Project, and Fremont Bridge Project. These funds are geared aimed to improve the motorists' safety and operation of the roadways.
 - The VRF- ITS competitive funds are aimed at implementing ITS technology to improve traffic operations and safety. The City is currently using ITS funds to construct the signal at the intersection of San Antonio/First/Cuesta.



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- The city recently submitted a new VRF-ITS application to install traffic adaptive signal software at intersections in the downtown area and El Monte Avenue to improve traffic operations. In addition, fiber optic lines and communication technology and smart traffic controllers are included to improve signal coordination between the city and county on El Monte Avenue.

Additional examples of grant fund types will be presented at the commission meeting.

Envision Silicon Valley

The Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is actively discussing the possibility of placing a County-wide transportation sales tax measure on the November 2016 ballot. This tax measure would focus on enhancing public transportation systems such as BART and Caltrain, improving pavement maintenance, highways, and expressways, and improving active transportation alternatives for bicyclists and pedestrians. It would provide a County-level source of transportation funds to supplement regional, state, and federal funds along with direct funding from local agencies.

Historically, County-wide transportation sales tax measures in California have employed a strategy of combining a list of specific, major regional projects to be funded with separate program categories within which smaller-scale projects (such as street re-paving or pedestrian and bicycle improvements) would be subsequently identified and funded. Projects of significant local importance (such as expressway improvements) could also come from a cross-over category in which the tax measure designates a funding level and specific projects are subsequently selected based on certain criteria.

VTA has undertaken “Envision Silicon Valley,” a campaign aimed at engaging community leaders in discussion of current and future transportation needs, identifying solutions and developing funding priorities. Projects identified would be carried forward into the Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2040 and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Plan Bay Area documents.

In August 2015, the County of Santa Clara, local cities, and transit agencies submitted projects to VTA for consideration as part of the “Envision Silicon Valley” and VTP 2040 updating process. An estimated \$40 billion in projects and programs were submitted for an estimated \$20 billion in potential funding (including future grant funds as well as the proposed sales tax funding).

The City submitted the following projects to VTA which were approved by the City Council at its June 23, 2015 meeting:

- Miramonte Avenue Bikeway Improvements
- Stevens Creek Link Trail along Fremont Avenue and Grant Road

- Foothill Expressway – Widening of Foothill Expressway from 4 to 6 lanes between El Monte Road and San Antonio Road by providing auxiliary lanes in both directions. Intersection improvements at El Monte include squaring off the northeast and southwest corners and signal/geometry modifications.
- El Monte Avenue Street Resurfacing Project - Providing 2-inch mill and overlay for the entire 2 miles of El Monte Road within the City limits (O’Keefe Lane at the border of Los Altos Hills to Hollingsworth Drive at the border of Mountain View).
- Fremont Avenue Street Resurfacing – Providing 2-inch mill and overlay on Fremont Avenue between Stevens Creek and Miramonte Avenue.
- Advanced Traffic Management System - Developing an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) throughout the City.
- Projects identified in both the Bicycle Transportation Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan

These projects, along with project lists submitted by other agencies provide the basis for discussion of a 2016 County-wide transportation sales tax.

VTA staff is currently discussing funding concepts, and it is expected that an initial proposal for the tax measure will be developed by VTA in early 2016. Based on discussions among stakeholders, it appears at this time that the following projects and programs are likely to be considered for the tax measure (likely a 30-year, 1/2 cent sales tax that would generate about \$6 billion over the life of the tax measure):

1. The BART Phase 2 extension to San Jose (and possibly to Santa Clara);
2. Increased capacity for Caltrain including longer trains, station and platform enhancements, and money for grade separations;
3. Expressway improvements based on the current County Expressway Plan with priorities including upgrades to the Foothill Expressway Widening between San Antonio Road/El Monte Avenue and El Monte/Foothill Intersection improvements;
4. Key freeway improvement projects including express lanes and interchange upgrades;
5. Local street and road pavement maintenance allocations with a possible provision to un-encumber local funds if an adequate pavement maintenance level is achieved;
6. Transportation improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians; and
7. Transit service improvements for seniors and people with disabilities.

Sales tax revenue allocation is currently being discussed by the VTA, member agency staff, City Council representatives to the VTA and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. Additional information regarding Envision Silicon Valley and public outreach can be located here, <http://www.vta.org/envision-silicon-valley/envision-silicon-valley>.